

DOMESTIC DUTIES ENFORCED.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED

At WEST-STREET CHAPEL

SEVEN-DIALS,

ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 9TH, MDCCXCIV.

By the Rev. JAMES CREIGHTON, A.B.

LET US FEAR, LEST A PROMISE BEING LEFT US OF ENTER-
ING INTO HIS REST, ANY SHOULD COME SHORT OF IT.
LET US LABOUR TO ENTER INTO THAT REST.

HEB. IV. -1. 11.

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S E R M O N, &c

DEUT. iv. 9.

TAKE HEED TO THYSELF, AND KEEP THY SOUL DILIGENT-
LY, LEST THOU FORGET THE THINGS WHICH THINE
EYES HAVE SEEN, AND LEST THEY DEPART FROM THY
HEART ALL THE DAYS OF THY LIFE: BUT TEACH THEM
THY SONS AND THY SONS SONS.

THE Book from whence I have chosen this text, is called DEUTERONOMY, which signifies a repetition of the Law: because herein, Moses, a little before his death, and at the end of the fortieth year from the coming out of Egypt, having assembled the Israelites in the plains of Moab on the eastern side of Jordan, recapitulates to them all the laws, both moral and ceremonial, respecting their polity; and commits them to writing for the information and instruction of every succeeding generation.

In like manner Joshua, just at the close of his life, assembled, and delivered his last charge to, this people; by their Elders, Judges, and chief Officers. And both these experienced

experienced faithful men, having recounted the great things which G^{OD} had done for them as a people, then warn and charge them not to have too intimate or unnecessary connection with the Canaanites, or with the nations around; especially not to intermarry with them, lest they should be led into idolatry, and so provoke the Lord to anger. A sad instance of which had very lately happened, when ~~G^{OD} destroyed twenty-four thousand of them~~; because they had committed fornication with the daughters of Moab, and by their means were induced to worship their Gods. *Balak*, by the advice of *Balaam*, used this stratagem to corrupt and destroy the Israelites, when he could not curse or hurt them by any other means.

Joshua, indeed, goes so far in his injunction, respecting this matter, as to forbid them even to *mention the names of their gods*; lest by so doing they might be brought insensibly and gradually to approve and worship them. Here, let us reflect on the progress which sin makes! Things not simply and in themselves evil, are forbidden, because they are occasions and introductions to sin. When the people of the world are civil to us, and we contract a familiar intercourse with them, we are in extreme danger. They prove, as it is expressed by *Joshua*, *snakes and traps* to us; *Scourges in our sides, and thorns in our eyes*. Therefore he exhorts the Israelites to *take good heed to themselves*; lest the Lord's anger should be kindled against them, and they at last be expelled from that fertile land.

This earnest and pathetic exhortation of *Moses* in the Text is very comprehensive, and deserves our most seri-

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our attention. It takes in our duty as a nation and a religious people: our duty to God, to ourselves, to our neighbours, to our families, and to posterity. I shall therefore beg leave to enforce it upon the present audience, by considering the words in the order they lie before us.

I. *Take heed unto thyself, and keep thy Soul diligently.* Here there are two phrases, which imply nearly the same thing: for, he that takes heed to himself, must of consequence pay a proper and peculiar attention to his *Soul*, which is the principal part of *himself*: but, as Moses hath used both in the text; we may consider them in a somewhat distinct point of view.

1. *Take heed to thyself.* This may refer to the outward conduct, respecting the nations around them; and particularly the Canaanites, who were the old inhabitants of the land. If they should observe all these statutes and laws, which God had enjoined; this would be a mark of their *wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations and people around*; who would thence be compelled to reverence and stand in awe of them; and would say, *Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people! for, what nation is there so great, who hath GOD so nigh unto them? or what nation hath judgments and statutes so righteous, as all this Law set before them this day?*

The Jews were selected from among the other nations; not because their ancestors were better by nature than others: but God appointed, or set them apart to be his peculiar people, to put his name among them, that by their means others might be led to adore and reverence the God

of Heaven: and by observing their circumspect walking, might be induced also to imitate them, in the practice of true religion. By their outward conduct, therefore, they might bring honour and respect not only to themselves as a people and a nation; but they would bring glory to God, and cause his name to be magnified throughout the earth. To this purport CHRIST exhorts his followers, saying, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

But, they were likewise to take heed, lest, in their intercourse with the people around, they should be contaminated or corrupted by them. As they must necessarily have some intercourse with them, in traffic and exchanging commodities; here they were in very great danger of becoming too familiar. They might learn their ways, their manners, and customs, their subtlety and cheating in the matter of bargain and sale: for, *as a nail sticketh fast between the joining of the stones; so doth sin stick fast between buying and selling*†. They were in danger of catching their spirit in many respects: especially by familiar converse; and intermarriages, they might be drawn away to idolatry: therefore Moses repeats the injunction three times in this chapter; *Take good heed to yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing which God hath forbidden: for he is a jealous God, yea, Jehovah is a consuming fire.* And Joshua repeats the same charge in these emphatical words;

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† Ecclesi. xxvii. 2,

Take good heed therefore to yourselves, that ye love Jehovah your God.

Again, they were to *take heed* to their outward deportment and conduct among themselves. They must not only *walk wisely towards them that are without*; but towards each other, and more especially before their households. They must be strict in the observance of all the relative duties; and each in his particular station endeavour, by his example and conduct, to promote the good of the community at large, as well as of those more intimately connected with him. This takes in a large field, comprehending all their moral and civil obligations, respecting their worship, and their adherence to justice, mercy and truth: in short, their whole duty to their neighbour; including not only their intimate friends and acquaintance; but the people of other nations and languages; yea, all the human race.

2. *Keep thy soul diligently.* This may imply their intercourse with God; their walking as *seeing Him that is invisible*. It includes both their public and private walk: their manner of conducting themselves, whilst transacting business with men, and in public worship in the great congregation: especially their conduct before the Searcher of hearts, who sees them in their private retirements, and in the darkest recess, even as in the noon-day. It is not enough to transact business with integrity and uprightness, and gain a good reputation among men: we must not only do justly, and love mercy; but we must walk humbly with our God. It is not enough to call God our
Father

Father and Lord, and worship him in the great congregation: we must do it in secret: we must *worship him in Spirit and in Truth*; and *do the things* which he hath enjoined. Men may carry themselves with outward decency, and gain a reputable name among their neighbours; and yet be guilty of such things in secret, as are an abomination in the sight of God.

Oh! what horrid scenes are transacted both by night and by day; and that even by some who are called men of a fair character, and very good sort of people; which will cause their acquaintance to stand amazed in that day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed! What diabolical practices are perpetrated in this great city every night; such as might cause even the material Sun to shroud himself in darkness, were he to behold them! --- *The adulterer, saith Job, waiteth for the twilight, saying, no eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.* Fool that he is! Doth not the Omnipresent and Omniscient JEHOVAH see him? What saith David upon this subject? *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit; or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there: if I go down into hell, thou art there also: If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea; even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.* He then concludes, praying, *Search me, O God, try my heart, and examine my thoughts: See if there be any wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

Again: *Keep thy Soul diligently*; it is a pearl of inestimable value, committed to thy care: See that thou preserve it unspotted and unpolluted; See that thou catch not

infection from the people of the world with whom thou hast to do: watch over thy thoughts, for "thoughts are heard in heaven:" take care lest thy affections be entangled with the things or persons around you. *Set your affections upon the things above*, saith the Apostle; *not upon things on the earth*. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, saith Solomon: *Be not partaker of other men's sins: Keep thyself pure*: saith St. Paul to Timothy. *Be diligent*, saith St. Peter, *that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless*. *Blessed is he*, saith Christ, *that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame*!

From all these expressions it appears, how necessary it is to keep a strict and constant watch, to see what passes within us: to know how matters stand between God and our Soul: and since the *heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*; to keep a jealous eye over it (if I may so speak) lest it should at any time betray us to the foe. This is necessary at all times; but never more so than in our intercourse with the people of the world, when they are very civil to us: we are then in danger of being off our guard, and lulled into a pleasing but fatal security. Here we stand on slippery ground; where, if we make a false step, it not only proves hurtful to ourselves, but we become a stumbling-block even to these very persons, and harden them against religion.

Keep thy soul diligently: and look not back to the flesh-pots of Egypt: With not for the ease, the indolence, the luxury, the carnal pleasures, the fleeting enjoyments and empty show of what the world calls great or excellent: Seek not the applause or approbation of your old companions in vice: If ye are made free, *Stand fast in that liberty, and*

be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. Acquit yourselves like men : follow them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises : Endure hardness as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ : Take his easy yoke upon you ; and "manfully fight under his banner, against sin, the " world, and the devil ;" till He crown you with victory in the end. Take unto you the whole armour of God ; and add thereto prayer, watchfulness, and perseverance. Pray that God would cleanse your heart, and keep it clean : that he would " cleanse the thoughts of your heart, that you " may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy " name." And, whilst Moses points out here our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves ; and exhorts the Israelites to the performance thereof ; he tells them in this book that God will enable them to perform it ; and declares that *God would circumcise their heart, and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul.* Indeed, we may lay it down as a rule in the interpreting of Scripture ; that where there is a command, there is a promise implied ; and where there is a promise, a condition is implied, though, perhaps, not always expressed.

II. Moses having pointed out their duty, both in a public and private capacity, as a people and as individuals : and, having exhorted them to the performance thereof ; adds a caution, or reminds them of what is worth the attention of every man and woman upon earth. He calls them to remember the Providence and the avenging justice of God : to recollect both what God had done for them, and performed in their sight ; and exhorts them never to forget it : How he had brought them out of Egypt with a
mighty

mighty hand, and an outstretched arm : how he had opened a passage for them through the Red Sea, so that they went as on dry land ; whilst at the same time Pharaoh and his hosts were overwhelmed in the waves : how he afterwards caused water to gush out of the rock, to afford them drink ; and then fed them with manna in the wilderness for forty years. He reminds them of the awful sight which they had seen, at the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai ; when there were thunders and lightnings, and the whole mount was enveloped with fire and smoke ; a sight so terrible, that all the people, yea Moses himself, exceedingly trembled.

He reminds them, not only of the many wonderful deliverances which God had wrought out for them, in punishing their enemies who opposed their progress : but of the awful judgments which he had inflicted upon some of themselves, in causing the earth to open, and swallow up *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*, together with their families and all their substance, because they murmured against God, and against Moses and Aaron his servants. And he reminds them particularly, in the context, of what *their eyes had seen because of Baalpeor* : how twenty-four thousand had been destroyed by a plague ; because they had committed whoredom and idolatry with the Moabites, very near to the spot where they now stood.

Having reminded them of all these things ; of God's providential care over them ; of his many and extraordinary deliverances ; of his anger and detestation against sin, and his severe and awful punishment, inflicted even in this world upon those that transgress his laws : he then exhorts them never to forget these things, nor let them *depart from their heart all the days of their life*. St. Paul

speaks in similar language to the Christian Hebrew converts in his day, saying, *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Moses and Paul were well acquainted with human nature. They knew how prone mankind are to forget the mercies or benefits of Providence; and how liable to depart from the living God. Forgetfulness leads to ingratitude: but ingratitude is so horrible a crime, that even the antient heathens used this kind of proverb,---“If you say a man is ungrateful, you say all:” i. e. it comprehends in it all other crimes.

Yet, notwithstanding all these exhortations and warnings; we find, by the subsequent part of their history, that they soon forgot God, who had saved them: they forgot his works, and the wonders which he had wrought for them in Egypt: yea, in the very generation that succeeded Joshua, and the Elders who were with him, their children intermarried with the people of the land, and served their gods. And, if we trace them through the succeeding ages, we shall find little else but one continued scene of idolatry with its concomitant vices, and a provoking of the Lord God to anger; 'till at length, according to the prediction of Moses in this very chapter, he expelled them from this fertile land, and scattered them among the nations around.

These things, my brethren, are written for our instruction and admonition, as well as for those to whom they were immediately and primarily delivered. It is our bounden duty, frequently to recollect what God hath done for us as a nation, for us as a people, and for each of us as individuals. To recollect, I say, both the temporal and spiritual mercies He has bestowed upon us; and not to
suffer

suffer them *to depart from our hearts all the days of our lives.* And, if we call them properly to mind ; it will surely excite gratitude in us, and this gratitude will shew itself in obedience to his laws, and a strict adherence to all that He has enjoined. Every individual will, if he thinks at all, recollect many wonderful deliverances, and ten thousand instances of God's providential care. Particularly they, who have been brought out of spiritual Egypt, should often reflect on the time when they served very bad and hard masters ; their own lusts and carnal appetites : and think how God delivered them, and brought their souls into a peaceable habitation, and a state of rest. Then let them join with David, and say, *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits : who hath forgiven thine iniquities, and healed thy diseases : who hath redeemed thy life from destruction, and crowned thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy !*

From history we may learn the events of past ages : but sacred history more especially claims our attention ; as it informs us of God's dealings with the children of men, particularly the Israelites his favourite people. Here also we have a true, though a very concise account of some things which came to pass before the flood*. In reading these things, we should reflect and consider who it is that *ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will* : who raiseth up one, and putteth down another. Tracing the events of antient times, and turning over the

* The Patriarchs before the flood could readily recite to many generations, such remarkable events as had happened in their days : and thus they supplied the place of history. Adam was 243 years cotemporary with Methuselah, who lived till the flood. Methuselah with Noah 600, and with Shem near 100. Shem with Abraham 150, and died when Isaac was 50 years old.

the pages of history is, indeed, a tedious work, which few have leisure for : but every one, methinks, should have a short sketch of the history of his own country fixed in his mind : I mean of events, wherein the hand of God was most manifest, either by inflicting judgments, or delivering from impending dangers. The present opportunity will not allow me time to enumerate many things, to which I would call your attention : I shall, therefore, leave you to reflect at your leisure.

But I wish more particularly to impress your minds with a sense of what God hath done for you as a Body of religious people ; of what your eyes have seen, and many of your hearts have felt of the power of Almighty God. Hath he not called you to be his people, who were not a people ? Recollect *the Signs and the wonders, which the High God hath wrought towards you* : and let them not depart from your hearts all the days of your lives. Beware of ingratitude, and *Laodicean* lukewarmness. Remember the day of your espousals :

“ The gladness of that happy day,

“ Oh ! may it ever, ever stay,

“ Nor let your Faith forsake its hold,

“ Nor hope decline, nor love grow cold !”

But, besides the things which your eyes have seen, I wish you to recollect and retain what your ears have heard. Be not as *children, tossed to and fro with every wind of contrary doctrine* : If any man preach any other Gospel to you than that which hath been preached to you, reject it and him. The perilous times, foretold by St. Paul and the other Apostles, seem to be now come ; wherein *some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits, and doctrines*

doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy: and others should deny the Lord that bought them.*

Maintain the doctrine of justification by faith, and of good works or holiness, consequent to faith; agreeable to St. Paul's advice to Titus. (Tit. iii. 8.) We must judge of a tree's goodness by its fruits: we must evidence our faith in our life and conduct; as Abraham did when he offered up his son Isaac. St. Paul and St. James may be easily reconciled, respecting faith and works, which must always go together. This is the doctrine of the Church of England in the 11th, 12th, and 13th Articles, and indeed throughout the whole tenor of her Liturgy, Collects, Homilies, and Articles. Let not these things depart from your hearts or minds *all the days of your lives.*

But, do not confine these things to yourselves; have regard to posterity. Teach them to your children; and, through them, impart them to other generations yet unborn. This is the advice of Moses, delivered to the Israelites in the latter part of the text; which he enforces again at the sixth verse, in the sixth chapter, saying---
These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. As this opens a very wide and extensive field, I can only touch upon a few particulars at present; and that chiefly respecting the training up of children in the ways of the Lord.

III. The

* See 1 Tim. iv. 1.—2 Tim. iii. 1.—1 Pet. ii. 1.—1 John iv. 1.
—Jude 4.

III. The instruction of youth is allowed to be a duty of the utmost importance, both to individuals, and to the community at large. But, who is sufficient rightly to discharge or undertake so great, so arduous an office ! The most experienced are more and more convinced of the difficulties that occur therein : and were one to live to the age of Methuselah, he might still learn more and more of this science, and yet be conscious that he was but a novice after all. Men may easily lay down general rules, in this as well as in other things ; but great difficulties occur in the practical part. A young lad who has learned the theory of Navigation, may readily point out the method to be used in steering a ship through the ocean : but he little knows the difficulties the poor mariner encounters from winds, currents, and tides ; and the numberless dangers arising from rocks, shoals, whirlpools, and quicksands. One might draw up a code of laws and statutes for some very remote nation ; but then he should be intimately acquainted with the nature of the inhabitants, their dispositions, manners and customs, and a thousand circumstances relating to the country itself ; otherwise his labour is to little purpose.

He that is acquainted with human nature, is sensible that it is in a depraved state : that tho' mankind were at first created *upright* and *good* ; yet they are now corrupt and "very far gone from original righteousness." He is convinced that *Man is born like a wild ass's colt, and drinks in iniquity like water.* But though this is true, respecting the whole human race ; and in this sense we are all alike ; yet there is an almost infinite variety, as to dispositions, constitutions, and tempers. And this difference is not only apparent in the inhabitants of nations, far
distant

different from each other ; but in those of the same nation, the same family, yea children of the same parents.

Hence arise many difficulties in the education and instruction of children ; not only in useful science and intellectual knowledge ; but respecting morals, and turning the bias of nature into a right channel ; or in training them up to answer the end of their being, which is the glory of God. It is therefore one principal business of the Parent or Instructor, to mark and study the different tempers and dispositions of children as they grow up, and to suit their instruction and discipline accordingly. Husbandmen carefully consider the nature of the ground to be planted or sown ; that they may suit the seed to the soil : so must we study the tempers, in order to conduct nature the way it will most easily go. Each man's mind has some peculiarity, as well as his face, that distinguishes him from others : and there are scarcely two children who can be conducted exactly by the same method. Every temper may afford some *handle*, whereby we may, as it were, take hold of them, and steer them the more easily : whereas, by taking a contrary method, we shall find great difficulty and reluctance. This knowledge of their temper, disposition, and capacity, is not acquired in a week, a month, or even a year : and therefore it requires a very penetrating discernment, and a persevering attention.

But, be it ever remembered, that tho' much may be done by early culture and attention of this kind ; yet God must bless our endeavours to cure and rectify a crooked disposition. We may plant and water, trim and prune the tree, yea and dig about the root too ; and yet when the fruit appears and is tasted, it may still be found to be only a crab. To all our other endeavours, therefore, we must add im-

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portunate prayer to God, saying, " Lord, I feel my weakness in this, as well as in other respects: I cannot change my *own* nature; much less that of others: I cannot add one inch to my stature, neither can I make one hair white or black: I can not bring a clean thing out of an unclean; but THOU canst do it: therefore I beseech thee to open the understanding, and seal instruction upon the mind of those whom thou hast given me, and intrusted to my care! Give them wisdom from above, and direct their hearts in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments!"

The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, among other relative duties, exhorts parents to bring up their children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord. The two words used by the Apostle here, are very emphatical and comprehensive. The former signifies instruction, or erudition, and is often translated *chastisement* or *correction*.^a God *chastiseth* or *correcteth* his children for their profits. *For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father doth his son in whom he delighteth.* Now no chastening (*paideia*) for the present is joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.

Hence it appears, that a degree of correction must be mingled with instruction; but it must be used, with love and bowels of compassion; in like manner as God corrects those whom he loves, and *doth not willingly afflict the children of men.* In correction, it is highly necessary to observe a medium between severity and moroseness on the one hand; and too much lenity and remissness on the other. Oh! what need of wisdom and experience, to steer the vessel.

|| *paideia* and *rebia*.

^a Derived from the verb *paideuo*, erudio, doceo, castigo.

† Prov. iii. 12.—Heb. xii. 11.

vessel committed to us, thro' this critical passage! It is like sailing between *Scylla* and *Charybdis*. But by looking to our great Pilot, we shall get through this difficulty also, and conduct our charge to *the haven where we would be*.

The other word † points out more clearly the kind of instruction or discipline to be used, which the Apostle here alludes to. It means the disposing, training up, or the disciplining of the mind: the leading it to its proper object, or disposing it to its proper end. Some consider education as little more than the fitting young persons for some profession or employment. And to this they add some refinement of manners; give them an address to qualify them to enter an assembly-room with gracefulness, or to appear at Court on a Levee-day. But, though these things may be proper in their place, when kept within due bounds, and in a certain degree: yet there is within us an immortal Spirit, which we should chiefly cultivate, and see that it be adorned with white raiment, and fitted to mingle with the *general assembly of the first-born whose names are written in Heaven*. It behoves us to cultivate the mind in such a manner, that the Soul may be united to God, and dwell with him for ever. Therefore the Apostle saith, *bring them up in the discipline of the Lord*: that is, in such a manner, as to qualify them to enter into the royal presence: to stand before **JEHOVAH**, the supreme Monarch of the Universe, emphatically called the **LORD**; because he is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

The time we live in has been called by some the age of Reason: but I fear it may with truth be said, that Infidelity and a contempt for religion at the same time very much abound. I am jealous with a godly jealousy over the rising

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generation;

αἰδολία, derived from *αἶς*, mens, and *τίθημι* pono, dispoño.

generation; and more particularly the children of religious parents. It has been said that these are commonly worse and more hardened than others. I hope it is not a general case; but is probably very often too much so. This observation may lead to serious reflexion, to consider what may be the cause.

The faculty of Reason in man has been accounted the characteristic which distinguishes him from the brutes: but it seems that *Devotion* more properly makes the difference. For, some brutes discover, in many instances, great acuteness and sagacity; but never the least symptom of devotion. Whereas the most rude and uncultivated of the human race, that have yet been discovered in any nation, have shewn *some* signs of devotion; tho' in many of them it is exceeding gross and absurd. From hence appears the usefulness and necessity of infusing good principles into the mind, and of forming it to early habits of devotion and religion. I do not admit that man comes into the world (*tabula rasa*) like a sheet of fair and unwritten paper; for, alas! whoever has studied human nature, and considered infants, even when at their mother's breast, must confess, that they have a strong bias to evil, to passion, to anger, and revenge.

But here, some pious and well meaning parents, who had more zeal than knowledge, in attempting to turn the bias of nature into a right channel, have taken a wrong method. Like young converts, who think to convert their relations and old acquaintance all at once; these parents want to make their children pure and holy in a trice: and they keep them so much at religious duty both at home and abroad, and cause them to read so much, that they get an aversion to it, and esteem that a mere drudgery, which

is, and always should be the most pleasing employment in life. As they grow up, the aversion increases; and tho' they may have acted the hypocrite for a time, thro' fear of the parents; by and by they throw off the mask, and profess themselves open Infidels. Perhaps improper conduct in their parents or other professing Christians, may have contributed to this infidelity; and they at length concluded there was no reality in religion.

Parents should remember, that whilst the tree is unchanged, they must not expect good fruit from it; at least not *all* that they wish for, until He that made their children, creates them anew. In devotion, as well as in other things, it would be well to mix the pleasing and the useful together, as far as may be; and convince them that *wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* It is true, that discipline and some coercive measures must be used; but then, as was hinted before, let it be done in moderation: let mildness and gentleness win their affections, whilst you enlighten their reason:

“And never take the harsher way,

“When love will do the deed.”

On the other hand, some parents verge to the opposite extreme. They use no restraint, nor check the luxuriant growth of vice in their children. Hence their passions get strength; habit confirms them, and makes a reformation every day more difficult. Then their reason being lulled into a fatal security, and the soul left without its rudder, they glide down the stream with others, 'till they are dashed against the rocks, or swallowed up in the whirlpool of everlasting destruction.

What shall we say of such parents? Surely they are destitute of natural affection, seeing they entail vice and misery upon

upon those who should be most dear to them. As they are unnatural, so they are void of love; *for he that spareth the rod, hateth his son: but he that loveth him, chasteneth him sometimes.* They are likewise most imprudent, laying up in the profligacy and disobedience of their children, the sharpest pangs of grief and shame for their own grey hairs. They are also bad citizens, breeding up a wicked race to corrupt Society.

But, to this their negligence, perhaps they have added a bad example; and thus become doubly guilty in the sight of God and man. Example has great influence; but the misfortune is, we are more inclined to follow the evil than the good. What an account will such parents have to give in the day of judgment! They will not only have to answer for their own sins; but, in a great degree, for those of others also. And they will not only feel remorse from their own self-condemning conscience; but will be upbraided by those who sprung from their own bowels, in such pungent language as this, “I was ignorant, and you instructed me not. I made myself vile, and you restrained me not. You did not train me up to the exercise of piety and devotion; and therefore I *lived without God in the world.* Nay, you shewed me a bad example; and I am now consigned to *everlasting burnings!*”

Perhaps the fault may lie more in one of the parents than the other; and that, either respecting *example*, or the *manner* of instruction. It is of the utmost importance that the parents should agree in their judgment, concerning the manner and method of instruction: because if they disagree, the child will be materially injured. If they differ in any respect, they should talk of it in private; and let the child know

know nothing about it; but agree to enforce each others precepts.

I shall now conclude, by addressing myself, first, to those who are young; who are come, in some degree, to the exercise of their reason. Let me exhort and intreat you to honour your parents: attend to their precepts and instruction: reverence their grey hairs, and strive to support them in declining nature. Reflect what anxiety and labour they underwent for you, when ye were incapable of helping yourselves: feel for them in their sickness, and in those days wherein *there is no pleasure*.

Ye are now in the morning of life, active and vigorous: give all diligence then to be possessed of those graces, that will shed lustre around you here, and will bloom to all eternity. Pray that God may give you his grace, may make you plants of renown, and fit you for the work he hath called you to do. Pray that he may make you useful members of the community, faithful citizens of your country, and servants to your God. In a word, that he may make you living Temples of the Holy Spirit, the present ornaments of the earth, and the future inhabitants of heaven.

I would next address myself to those who are farther advanced in years, but not married; and to such who, though married, have not children. To such I would say, *Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently*: but beware of forming too hasty a judgment of parents, respecting their conduct towards their children. Perhaps the fault lies in the child, perhaps in the parent, perhaps partly in both: perhaps ye do not see the difficulties that are to be overcome. Be modest, therefore, and say but little upon the subject at present. They who are least experienced in this, as well as in other things, are very often the most confident. Ye know the old proverb:—"Bachelors' wives, and maidens' children" are the most perfect beings upon earth: but they are beings that never yet existed, save only in imagination.

Lastly.

Lastly, I would once more intreat you that are parents to consider the relative station in which ye stand, respecting your fellow citizens and your countrymen: respecting the members of a religious Society, and those of your own household. In all these respects, ye are called upon to *take heed* to your outward conduct and intercourse with men, and your secret walk with the Searcher of hearts. Your situation is of the greatest importance: therefore treasure up grace and divine truth in your own minds, and as far as you can, communicate them to others, especially to your children, and through them to posterity. And, however arduous the task be that ye are called to undertake: however great the cross, which ye must take up: yet rely on his word, who has promised to support you, and will lay no more upon you than he will enable you to bear. His Spirit is ever near to instruct you, in teaching others, particularly those of your own family. And, if ye and they are faithful to the grace and to the light given; Oh! reflect on the honour that will be conferred on you both, when ye shall stand before the throne in the new Jerusalem! Are ye anxious that your children should be possessed of a graceful carriage, and an elegance of manners, in order to appear in a genteel company? Let me excite in you a nobler ambition: that ye and your children may be adorned with a *meek, and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price*:

“Cloath’d with humility and love, *And not a single*

“With every daz’ling virtue bright:” *yet far more*

Be ambitious that ye and your children may be *all-glorious within*: that ye may have on the wedding garment, that white robe which will never tarnish; nay, which will increase in lustre, when the pageantry and empty pomp of Courts, and the splendor of diamonds shall be no more. Be ambitious to be able to say to the KING OF KINGS;—
“here we are, O Lord; and, of the children whom thou hast given us, we have lost none!” *even such should our*

AMEN



FINIS